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THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW AND DICK'S THEOLOGY: THE REVIEWER REVIEWED.

JUSTIFICATION—IMPUTATION—FAITH.

THE utmost range of human thought could not furnish to a guilty convinced sinner, a question of more intense interest than that proposed by Job—"How should man be just with God?" But however important the question, the united intelligence of men and angels could never have solved it. The solution could be given by Infinite Wisdom alone. It is to be found in the Volume of Revelation. "The glorious Gospel of the Blessed God," contemplating the human race as in themselves guilty, condemned, helpless, and hopeless children of wrath, reveals the method according to which the sinner's guilt may be removed, the sentence of condemnation reversed, himself restored to the favour of God, declared righteous, and entitled to eternal life. The doctrine of a sinner's justification before God is not one of incidental occurrence in the Scriptures, but runs through the whole of the Inspired Volume. In the writings of the Apostle Paul more especially, and particularly in his Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, it occupies a very distinguished place. He there demonstrates, with great clearness and cogency of argument, that we cannot be justified by works, or by any merit of our own, but only on account of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

But although thus clearly taught in Scripture, there is, perhaps, no other doctrine of Revelation which has given occasion to so great diversity of opinion, or has been attended with so much theological controversy. Nor will this appear surprising when we consider the distinguished place it occupies in the sys-

tem of revealed truth—its connexion with almost every other doctrine of the Gospel—and that its investigation brings it into contact, and often into collision, with a countless variety of human passions, prejudices, modes of thinking, and degrees of intelligence and of religious information. To all this may be added the numerous subjects of discussion which the doctrine necessarily involves: requiring that it be considered in relation to the subjects of justification, its source, author, nature, time, distinguishing properties, procuring cause, immediate ground, medium of bestowment, evidences, effects, &c. To notice all the differences of opinion that have arisen from these and other causes that might be mentioned, would be foreign to our present purpose. We shall mention only a few of the most distinguished. The Church of Rome, confounding justification with sanctification, maintains that the former is not by the imputation of righteousness, but by the infusion of righteous dispositions—that Christ merited the grace, for those who are justified, which is in them, and then this inherent grace in them merits their justification. Socinians and Pelagians maintain that we are justified solely by our works of obedience to the Divine law. Neonomians contend for justification on the ground of obedience to a new law of grace, which *new law*, they say, was purchased by Christ, and requires only faith, repentance, and sincere though imperfect obedience. Antinomians assert that we are justified from eternity, and that any other justification mentioned in Scripture, means no more than its manifestation to the conscience of believers. In opposition to all these opinions, and others that might be mentioned, we are taught in our excellent Westminster Confession of Faith, upon the foundation of Scripture testimony, that *not from eternity, but in time*, "Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith."

Even among those who profess to maintain the doctrinal articles of our Confession, there exist important differences of opinion in reference to this doctrine. A striking instance of this occurs in a review of Doctor Dick's Lectures on Theology, published in the Presbyterian Review for May, 1834. In that

ably conducted and highly useful periodical, the doctrines taught in our Confession and Catechisms are, in almost every instance, scrupulously adhered to and triumphantly defended. In the article referred to, however, the writer, in his strictures on the Doctor's Lecture on Justification, and the place that faith occupies in relation to it, discovers a laxity of thought, a want of metaphysical and logical accuracy, and a disregard of the obvious meaning of our accredited standards, and of the testimony of Scripture therein referred to, very unusual in the pages of the Presbyterian Review. This remark may seem severe. We proceed to demonstrate its justice.

The Reviewer having made some judicious remarks on the Doctor's views concerning the assurance of faith, adds—

"In connexion with this subject, we find the same lax views in reference to the place which faith is alleged to hold in the justification of the sinner. It is regarded as hyper-orthodoxy to state that the Spirit does not work faith in a man who is under the curse of the law; and there are two reasons adduced by our author, why he regards this opinion as erroneous.

"The first is, that notwithstanding their subjection to the curse, God did love men, and bestow upon them the unspeakable gift of his Son. I would wish to know what there is peculiar in the gift of the Spirit, which should prevent God from giving him till the curse is removed; or how it comes to pass, that, while men were under the guilt of sin, God might send his Son to die for them, but cannot send his Spirit to infuse life into their souls. The second reason is, that no reasoning, however plausible, can support any theory in opposition to Scripture. If the Scripture declares that we are 'justified by faith,' that righteousness is imputed to those who believe, and calls the righteousness of Christ, 'the righteousness which is by faith,' plainly signifying that faith is antecedent, what right has any man to come forward and tell me, that I should beware of being misled by this language, for that it is not the true order of things?

"Now," observes the reviewer, "these two reasons, plausible though they may appear at first sight, afford no sufficient ground for rejecting the doctrine which they are brought to disprove. In regard to the apparently triumphant question, 'What is there peculiar in the gift of the Spirit?' &c. we reply, that there is one striking peculiarity which makes it out as essentially distinct from the mission of the Son—it is directly consequent upon that mission. Our Lord took great pains to inculcate the doctrine, that the mission of the Spirit was entirely the fruit of his own. 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him unto you.' No man, therefore, can partake of the Spirit's influences, whether *common* or *special*, unless in consequence of Christ's finished work. The common influences are limited to no particular class of mankind; the special, however, are the exclusive privilege of the elect people of God. It should be remembered, then, that faith being peculiar to the elect alone, must be regarded as belonging to the latter class of influences. As long, however, as a man is in an unjustified state, he is, and can be partaker of no spiritual privileges, unless as a common gift of the Spirit; and if faith be bestowed upon

him while in this state, then is a grace no longer peculiar to the people of God, but the common privilege of the whole human family. And further, 'faith worketh by love.' We are driven, therefore, to the conclusion, that a man in an unjustified state may love the Redeemer, and produce works acceptable in the sight of God. What, then, is the use of justification? If a man can believe, and consequently repent and obey, while he is still under the curse, there is no need whatever for the arrangements of the Gospel scheme. The contrary doctrine may be styled hyper-orthodox, but is nevertheless sober truth; and could never, for a moment, have been doubted, were it not that there is a lurking tendency in our minds to imagine that there is something meritorious in the act of faith. Faith and justification are closely united throughout the whole of the New Testament; and it is difficult, indeed, to divest ourselves of the impression that there is something like a causal efficiency in the former to produce, or at least to lead to the other.

"Now, the fact is, directly the reverse is true. The sole ground or reason of our justification, and consequently, of the removal of the curse from us, is the imputation to us of the righteousness of Christ; and the reason why we believe, or why the Spirit works in us any special grace at all, is wholly to be traced to the imputation of that same righteousness. And hence we find the apostle regarding faith as a *work*, and by this expression (what expression?) we are taught to view it as placed on the same footing, in the doctrine of justification, with any other act of acceptable obedience; and, consequently we are bound to believe that its acceptableness, its efficiency, its very origin is to be traced to the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness."

The question in dispute is, "whether we are justified before faith or after it; or, whether the act of God imputing the righteousness of Christ to us, or our receiving it by faith, be first in the order of nature," concerning which, the Doctor in the section of his lecture immediately preceding that animadverted on by the Reviewer, and which we have already quoted, thus writes.

"Before I consider the office of faith in justification, it is necessary to attend to the question, whether we are justified before faith or after it; or, whether the act of God imputing the righteousness of Christ to us, or our receiving it by faith, be first in the order of nature? The question will probably astonish you; but it has actually engaged the attention of some theologians, and given rise to much discussion and metaphysical argumentation. Those who aim at being exceedingly accurate and consummately orthodox, maintain, 'that justification, as it is the act of God, is, in the order of nature, antecedent to our faith; and that our faith is antecedent to it, as it is passively received into, and terminated on, our conscience.' The last words I do not well understand; but if they have any meaning, it must be, that the assurance of our justification, and the peace of conscience which flows from it, are posterior to faith. But surely if men would allow themselves to think, they would see that this assurance is not justification, but a fruit or consequence of it. It follows from this theory, that what has been always understood by justification, is not that which is spoken of in the Scriptures when we are said to be justified by faith,

but a certain state of mind closely connected with it. It is not the sentence of God pronounced upon the sinner, but his knowledge and experience of the sentence. It would seem, then, that we have been all along in an error; and that while we supposed that we became righteous by faith, and gave credit to the Scriptures, which told us that righteousness would be imputed to us if we believed, the matter is transacted in a different manner. We become righteous without faith; righteousness is imputed to us before we believe. The principal argument by which this opinion is supported is, that faith is a fruit of the Spirit, and that the Spirit cannot be given to men while they are under the curse of the law, which is not repealed till they are actually justified. The curse is an impenetrable barrier in the way of all gracious communications. But although this seems to be logical reasoning, there are two reasons why I deem it inconclusive."

These judicious remarks, which bear so hard on the Reviewer's favourite opinion, he prudently omits to notice, and proceeds at once, as he imagines, to demolish the Doctor's two reasons for not admitting that we are justified before we believe. In attempting this, he first states, that because the mission of the Spirit is a consequence and fruit of Christ's mission, therefore no man can partake of the Spirit's influences, whether *special* or *common*, unless in consequence of Christ's finished work. From this statement—which, it must be admitted, contains in itself no proof that a man, while under the curse, cannot partake of any special influence of the Spirit, he arrives at the desired conclusion by a course of reasoning that, when analysed, amounts to the following syllogism:—The special influences of the Spirit are the exclusive privilege of the elect; faith is a special influence of the Spirit, therefore faith cannot be given to any man in an unjustified state. The conclusion is evidently a *non sequitur*—it cannot be drawn fairly from the premises. The sophism lies in the using of the terms *elect* and *justified* as synonymous. The Reviewer, no doubt, imagined that he reasoned logically; but his reasoning amounts to a mere sophism. Every justified person belongs to the elect people of God; but every one of God's elect is not actually justified. Every elect individual of the human family that ever existed, either is, or was, at some period, in an unjustified state. All are by nature under the curse, and children of wrath.

What the Reviewer subsequently states about being *driven*, by the opinion he opposes, "to the conclusion, that a man in an unjustified state may love the Redeemer, and produce works acceptable in the sight of God," and that "if a man can believe, and consequently repent and obey, while he is still under the curse, there is no need, whatever, for the arrangements of

the Gospel scheme;" all this we hesitate not to designate, a silly *caricature* of the doctrine of justification by faith, as taught in the Scriptures, and clearly illustrated and ably defended in Dr. Dick's Lectures. Is it really true, as the Reviewer afterwards asserts, that "the contrary doctrine (his own view of the subject) could never for a moment be doubted, were it not that there is a lurking tendency in our minds to imagine that there is something meritorious in the act of faith?" Are we not rather *driven to the conclusion*, that the Reviewer, dazzled by the imaginary beauty of his own theory, was unconscious of the unfairness of his deductions, of the fallacy of his arguments, and of the clearness and conclusiveness of the evidence by which the opinion he opposes is supported? How, otherwise, can we reconcile with his statements, the fact, that Dr. Dick, and other eminent divines who agree with him on the point in debate, strenuously deny *any degree of merit* to belong to justifying faith? and that they carefully distinguish between the first act of faith, in which we are united to Christ, and the subsequent actings of the life of faith, which 'work by love'—'purify the heart'—and overcome the world.' Was the Reviewer not aware that the compilers of our Confession and Catechisms studiously guard against the conclusions so unfairly drawn by him? Thus, in Larger Catechism, Question 73—"How doth faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?—Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him, for his justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness." Did the Reviewer never read the apostle's arguments, in his Epistle to the Romans, to prove that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law?"—that "it is of faith that it might be by grace"—and that righteousness is imputed to him that worketh not, but believeth." Would not the apostle's reasoning be absurd, if, as the Reviewer affirms, "he regarded faith as a *work*, by which expression we are taught to view it as placed on the same footing, in the doctrine of justification, with any other act of acceptable obedience?" Where are we taught by any expression of the apostle to view faith, *in justification*, upon any such footing? Was there a *lurking tendency* in the apostle's *mind, to imagine that there is something meritorious in the act of faith*, when, speaking of the justification of Abraham, by the imputation of righteousness to him, he

adds, Rom. iv. 23, 24, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it *shall be imputed, if we believe.*" According to the Reviewer's scheme, the apostle should have said, "But for us also, *who shall believe, if it shall be imputed unto us;*" for he asserts that faith is the fruit of imputation. We admit that there is a sense in which "we are bound to believe," in relation to faith, "that its acceptableness, its efficiency, its very origin, is to be traced to the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness." God may be said, in the covenant of grace, to have imputed to the elect what the Redeemer engaged to accomplish in their name and stead.

Again, when Christ, "being made a curse for us, delivered us from the curse of the law," the merits of his obedience and death were reckoned or imputed to the elect. In virtue of the former imputation, believers under the Old Testament were made partakers of the special influences of the Spirit, though their justifying righteousness was not *actually* procured. In virtue of the latter imputation—the reckoning of Christ's finished work as accomplished for his people, though many of them did not then exist, the benefits of redemption are in due time applied by the Spirit, in effectual calling. Did the Scriptures speak of no other imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, we would at once agree with the Reviewer in asserting, that faith, as well as the other graces of the Spirit, is the fruit of imputation. But the Reviewer himself speaks of an imputation of righteousness, different from what has been mentioned. He says—"the act of imputation leads to the instant acting of faith, so that they may be said to be co-existent in point of time." But here his mistake originates. He attributes to that imputation of righteousness, by which we are actually and personally justified, what properly belongs to the imputation before mentioned. When the Redeemer in eternity as surety engaged, and in time virtually obtained deliverance from the curse, what he engaged, and what he actually accomplished, was imputed or reckoned to the account of all the elect people of God. Thus a way was opened up for the free egress and communication to the sinner of the Spirit's influences, whether special or common. But imputation in neither of these ways, nor in both together, is that by which we become *personally* justified before God. The sinner still remains actually under the curse and a child of wrath, till he is personally united to Christ, and justified by faith. Will the Reviewer affirm that any man can be actually justified and in a

state of accceptance with God while in a state of disunion from Christ? or that he can be in a state of vital union with Christ and still an unbeliever? The Scriptures plainly teach the contrary—John iii. 18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already." Verse 36, "The wrath of God abideth on him." Rom. viii. 1, "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." In the face of all such evidence to the contrary, the Reviewer asserts that a person "believes, not in order that he may be justified, but his believing shows that he is justified." This is in direct opposition to the apostle's statement, Gal. ii. 16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even *we have believed* in Jesus Christ, *that we might be justified by the faith of Christ*, and not by the works of the law.

But it is time we should attend to the manner in which the Doctor's second reason, namely, that adduced from Scripture testimony, is disposed of by the Reviewer.

"But," he proceeds to say, "we are met by the objection of the Rev. Professor, that the doctrine we now maintain is in opposition to Scripture, and the passages adduced are such as mention faith and justification in close conjunction with each other. For example, 'We are justified by faith'—'The righteousness which is by faith.' Now these passages, which are the only two to which reference is made, bear not in the slightest degree upon the point, unless it should be meant that we should consider faith as having an actual efficiency in the justification of the sinner. From an opinion of this kind, however, the worthy Doctor would have instantly recoiled."

Now, we have no reason for admitting that the Doctor would have recoiled from an opinion, to the belief of which there was more than a *lurking tendency in his mind.* For although he was far from ascribing to faith a *meritorious* efficiency in justification, yet that it has an *instrumental* efficiency, and is a *sine qua non*—that without which, according to the economy of salvation, we could not be justified, he strenuously maintains. We do not, indeed, approve of the manner in which, in one place, he expresses himself on this point—'It was the will of God that we should not be immediately justified on the ground of the obedience and death of his Son in our room, but that some act of our minds should precede the application of his merits to us.' This language, we admit, is unguarded, and calculated to convey a meaning that the author never intended should be attached to it. Yet we cannot agree with the Reviewer, when, in allusion to it, he says, "The author has not been sufficiently impressed with

the utter inefficiency of faith, in the act of justification, in so far as God is concerned." Now, in so far as God is concerned, as a judge in the act of justifying, we believe the Doctor was as sufficiently impressed with the *utter inefficiency of faith* in justification, as the Reviewer himself could be; but in so far as God the Spirit is concerned in the union of the soul to Christ, in which we become one spirit with him, and with him receive his righteousness, any impression of the *utter inefficiency* of faith was not, and should not be entertained. The Doctor seemed to accord with the statement in our Shorter Catechism, on this point—"The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ, in our effectual calling;" and viewing this union as being, in the Gospel scheme, necessary, in order to the actual imputation of Christ's righteousness in the justification of the sinner, he is understood by us to have meant no more in the objectionable sentence already quoted.

In attempting to prove that the two passages of Scripture adduced by the Doctor, *do not bear upon the point in the slightest degree*, the Reviewer says—"We admit the doctrine of our Confession, which asserts, in reference to believers, that 'they are not justified until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ to them.' The Spirit applies Christ to the soul, and thus justifies the sinner; the believer under the guidance of the Spirit puts forth an act of faith, and thus accepts of Christ's righteousness as the sole ground of his justification; he only receives that which forms its ground and confidently relies upon it."

Here we would ask—Is the actual application of Christ to the sinner, by the Holy Spirit, an *exclusive privilege of the elect people of God?* or is it *the common privilege of the whole human family?* Is Christ actually applied to the sinner by the *special* influence of the Spirit? or does such application amount only to a *common gift of the Spirit?* Will the Reviewer venture to deny its *special* character? If he is bound to admit it, what becomes of his favourite opinion, that "as long as a man is in an unjustified state, he is, and can be partaker of no spiritual privileges, unless as a common gift of the Spirit?" And if, as he asserts, the sinner is justified by the actual application of Christ, does it not necessarily follow, that this special privilege is obtained prior to justification. If we are not authorized to draw the conclusion in the affirmative, then we may expect the end without the means, and the effect without the cause.

The assumption of an erroneous principle at the first, namely, "that so long as a man is under the curse, he cannot partake of any special influence of the Spirit," seems to have involved the Reviewer in a series of confusion and mistake. Thus, for example, he confounds the *Spirit's application of Christ* to the soul, with *the imputation of Christ's righteousness*, when he says—"The Spirit applies Christ to the soul, and thus justifies the sinner." He confounds the operation of the Spirit in the application of Christ in effectual calling, or regeneration, with the judicial act of God imputing Christ's righteousness, and so justifying him that believes. What properly belongs to, and results from Christ's finished work, when he virtually "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," he ascribes to our actual and personal deliverance from the curse in justification, when we have actually "received the atonement." Thus he says—"No man can partake of the Spirit's influences, whether special or common, unless in consequence of Christ's finished work." And again—"He neither believes, nor loves, nor repents, unless on the ground of the Redeemer's merits." Now, these statements are in themselves true, but misapplied by the author: being used in relation to the justification of the sinner; whereas the existence of faith, repentance, love, or any other grace in the soul, is not the immediate result of the imputation of the Redeemer's merits in justification; but is produced by the Spirit's application of Christ and his purchased redemption, in regeneration. To have correct ideas of the mutual relation that exists between regeneration and justification, is a matter of greater importance than many are aware of. These important changes in man's condition, are effected in the same instant of time, and the one never takes place without the other. Immediately previous to both, the sinner is under the curse, and dead in trespasses and sins. But although inseparable, they ought to be accurately distinguished. Regeneration is the *work of the Spirit*, and is a *real change* by having a *principle of spiritual life imparted*. Justification is a *judicial act*, producing a *relative change*, in which we are *freed from guilt, and obtain a title to eternal life*. In the former, the *nature is changed*, and we become *new creatures*: in the latter, the *state is changed*, and we *stand in a new relation to God*. In regeneration we are *united to Christ and actually receive his righteousness*: in justification we are *regarded as in Christ*, and his righteousness is *imputed to us*. In union with Christ we have faith; and are not actually justified before it, because we are "justified by faith," Rom. v. 1. W.

THE REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL OUR OWN FAULT:

A Conversation between a Hearer and his Minister.

Hearer.—In your sermons, Sir, you urge us very earnestly to close with the proposal of mercy made through Jesus in the Gospel, and you assure us that if we refuse, the fault is entirely our own. Permit me to ask how this can be, when we are told that no man *can* come to Christ except the Father draw him?

Minister.—That no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him is most true, but it is also true, that if we do not come we have ourselves, and ourselves alone, to blame; and, instead of answering your question, *how* this can be? it may be as well, at least, in the first place, to satisfy you that *it is so.* For this purpose let me ask—are not the blessings of salvation offered to all who hear the Gospel, without a single exception?

H.—Yes, certainly, for it is said, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

M.—And is not God perfectly sincere in making such an offer, and willing that it should be universally accepted?

H.—Of course he is—to attribute insincerity to God would be blasphemous.

M.—Then if an invitation so earnest and sincere is addressed to us, and if we refuse to comply with it, must there not be guilt somewhere, either on God's part or on our part?

H.—No doubt of it; but we cannot throw the blame upon God—*that* would be a horrible imputation; so I suppose we must take the blame to ourselves.

M.—Do you only *suppose* it? Are you not *sure* of it? How reluctant we are to deal honestly with ourselves, and to look an unwelcome truth full in the face!

H.—I admit that in this case the truth is unwelcome, but I cannot refuse to receive it; I must believe that if we reject the offer of mercy, the guilt is all our own. But still I cannot see how this can be reconciled with our own inability to receive the Gospel.

M.—Your difficulty, it is true, has not been removed; but, nevertheless, an important point has been gained. You are now satisfied of two things, first, that it is our own fault if we do not comply with the Gospel invitation; and, secondly, that we cannot comply with it if left to ourselves. Now if, instead

of attempting to show the agreement between these two truths, I should ask you to point out their disagreement, what would you say?

H.—I always thought it would be as difficult to prove that they are opposed to one another, as it would be to reconcile them; but now I am satisfied that they *cannot* be opposed in reality, whatever they may be in appearance, for they are both *true*, and truth cannot be opposed to itself.

M.—And is not this another important point gained? You believe the two great truths of which we have been speaking, and you believe that these truths cannot be shown to disagree; and that even although with our limited faculties we should not be able to reconcile them, no discrepancy whatever really exists between them. And now what more can you ask?

H.—I admit that I have no right to ask any more. Though curiosity be not entirely satisfied with what you have said, faith has no more questions to put. Still, however, I cannot see why God should call upon sinners to repent and believe the Gospel, when he knows that of themselves they cannot comply.

M.—And what if you should not see the reason for God's acting in this manner? It is enough for you to know that thus he is pleased to act; and surely you will not suspect the justice and propriety of any of his doings. But I will come down from this high ground and meet your remaining difficulties more closely. You ask why does God call upon sinners to close with the offer of Jesus, although he knows they cannot do it? I answer, why did the prophet by Divine command prophecy to the dry bones in the valley, and say unto them, "O ye dry bones hear the word of the Lord," although he knew that they could not do it. Why did Jesus say to the man that had the withered hand—"Stretch forth thy hand," although he knew that he could not do it?

H.—Oh, but in each of these cases a power accompanied the word and made it effectual.

M.—Just so; and when sinners are called upon to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, though the Scriptures represent them to be dead as the dry bones, and impotent as the man whose hand was withered, a power accompanies the word and makes it effectual to those that shall be saved. "The words that I speak unto you," says Jesus, "they are spirit and they are life." Is not this explanation quite satisfactory?

H.—Perfectly so; it has wholly removed one difficulty, but there is another which you will excuse me for mentioning.

I know that you have removed it already, by stating the *facts* on the authority of God, and leaving the matter there ; but if you could call any more light upon it I would feel happy. How can those who do not close with the proposals of mercy be regarded as guilty, and be punished accordingly for not doing what they have no power to do?

M.—You are right in saying that this difficulty has been met already. It is *a fact* that those who reject the Gospel are condemned for their unbelief, and it is also *a fact*, that faith is not of ourselves; so that even although we should not be able to reconcile these two facts, we ought humbly to receive the testimony of God, in regard to each of them. But the additional light which you wish, may be cast on the subject, by considering the kind of inability under which the sinner labours.

H.—I think I have heard of a natural and a moral inability, but I do not fully understand the distinction.

M.—Then I shall try to make it plain to you—a knowledge of it is essential to a clear view of the subject on which we are speaking. A person is deprived of his legs, and is therefore unable to walk—is not this an instance of one kind of inability?

H.—It is; and I suppose that such inability is called *natural.*

M.—You are right; and now let us conceive of another individual who has all his members complete. He is standing, we shall say, on the bank of a deep river, and he is asked to walk into the stream. Can he do so?

H.—Manifestly not; the love of life would prevent him.

M.—What! he has all his organs in full exercise, and can he not walk?

H.—He can, but not into the river. O now I see what moral inability means, and I fully understand the distinction.

M.—Let us therefore apply the illustration. The sinner is under no *natural* inability to believe in Jesus; he has all the faculties necessary for this purpose, and he is daily exercising those faculties in believing the testimony of those around him. The inability under which he labours is what the Westminster Divines have most appropriately called an *inability of will*, and is purely *moral.*

H.—And hence I would suppose, that when Jesus says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," his meaning is explained when he says, "And ye WILL not come to me, that ye might have life."

M.—Exactly so; but let us go on with our illustration. The two individuals—the person who is deprived of his legs,

and the other who has the use of all his organs, are brought together, we shall suppose, on the bank of the river, and they are both told to leap in; which of them will be more ready to obey?

H.—In respect to their obeying, there will be no difference between them; they will both refuse.

M.—So that *moral inability operates as powerfully, wherever it exists, as natural inability could possibly do*, and thus you will see with what propriety the Scriptures represent the sinner as "dead in trespasses and sins."

H.—As far as this goes, it is highly satisfactory.

M.—But we must go farther. Opposite to the bank where the two individuals are placed, a fellow-creature, we shall suppose, is drowning; and thus it becomes *a duty* to leap in, for the purpose of attempting to save him: whose duty does it become?

H.—Not the duty of the cripple certainly, who is naturally unable to move, but of the other individual, who is only morally unable, since he has every thing necessary but the will.

M.—Then *moral inability does not exempt from* OBLIGATION. Remember this important truth, and apply it to the sinner. We shall now suppose that the drowning man is allowed to perish, and that the two individuals are called to an account for making no attempt to save him. What answer do you think each of them would give?

H.—The cripple would say that he saw his fellow-creature sinking, but that, being maimed, he could not leap in to his assistance, and this reply would be quite satisfactory. The other individual, however, would be forced to admit that he might have leaped in if he had pleased; and his only apology would be, that he could not think of risking his life, even for the deliverance of a perishing neighbour.

M.—And would this apology, do you think, be sufficient?

H.—By no means, since the circumstances are supposed to be such, that to risk his life was his duty.

M.—We therefore arrive at the conclusion, that moral inability is no apology for the omission of duty, and that it does not free the offender from guilt and punishment. Now apply this truth to the sinner, and what result will it lead us to?

H.—To the very one to which I have been anxious to be led in this manner—*that the sinner stands condemned for the rejection of the Gospel, even although he is morally unable to receive it.*

M.—Then would it not appear undeniable, that even al-

though no individual of our race should ever close with the proposal of mercy, no imputation could be cast upon the Divine Being, were he to publish that proposal over the world, and punish mankind for refusing it?

H.—This is quite evident, since the inability of mankind to comply is purely moral; and such inability can neither exempt them from obligation, nor furnish them with any apology.

M.—So far is it from furnishing any apology for the sin of man, that I might take high ground, and maintain that the determined opposition of the whole heart and soul, which constitutes that inability, is the very essence of his sin itself. But to conduct you to the end of my argument, let me ask another question. If a part of mankind are selected, their moral inability overcome by external agency, and themselves led to close with Jesus, can this in any way affect the other part, who remain as they were?

H.—Manifestly not. God is acting as properly, in publishing the Gospel to them, as if none had been led to receive it. Their moral inability continues the same, and, therefore, their obligation to repent and believe, and the guilt of their refusing, remain as before.

M.—So that while the doctrine of man's inability is true, and while the doctrine of election is true, it is also true that THE REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL IS OUR OWN FAULT. What a solemn truth on earth! What an awful truth in hell! May God fix it in our minds, and bless it to our souls!

H.—Amen.

ARCHIPPUS.

THE THEATRE.

To the Editors of the Christian Freeman.

I WAS once acquainted with a lady, who, on principle, abstained from attending the theatre for many years. However, having a few friends on a visit, and some of them being theatrically inclined, they proposed that she and her husband should accompany them to the theatre for one night. It was with some difficulty that they succeeded in persuading her. They reached the theatre; but, on entering the door, she saw before her, printed in large letters, "*The way to the pit.*" Instant dread seized her; she turned; and all her friends could say, they could not prevail on her again to enter. She felt that it

was, indeed, "*the way to the pit*"—a pit more fearful than was ever the pit of a theatre delightful to its votaries.

Now I would ask, is not the theatre, in this sense, *the way to the pit?* Its fellowship is with the ungodly. It leads down to the chambers of death, and its steps take hold on hell. By the lure of its fantastic pleasures, Satan decoys thousands of giddy mortals to destruction.

I once visited the theatre. On entering, I saw a splendid ceiling, and on this a number of human figures painted, male and female. How was I shocked, when, in the play, the actors lifted up their hands in the attitude of prayer to these very figures, and addressed them—"We implore you, ye gods and goddesses!" At other times, they would swear by them in the most solemn manner, and seemingly pay them adoration. I began to think that all the evil that I had heard of the theatre was nothing, compared to this. I witnessed, if not the spirit, the form of idolatry. Can the Christian sit by and see that form of adoration paid to paintings which belongs to God only? No, he cannot bear even the form of idolatry, though it be but the form. Even when God is directly addressed, is it not in a play? Is it not acted? It is not real worship, it is true, but it is the mockery of worship. Is it right to mimic and to act the worship of God? There is something horrible in the idea. It is profanity. It is taking the name of God in vain; and the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Many tell us that they can be in as serious a mood in the theatre as at home. But I ask, how is a man spending his midnight hours in a play-house qualified to pray, lead us not into temptation, whilst he is in the midst of temptation, and tempting the devil and his thousand agents to tempt him. Let all, especially your town readers, who wish to live and reign with Christ, religiously avoid the snares of the theatre.

Φιλος.

WANT OF CANDOUR AMONG PARTIES, IN THEIR REPRESENTATIONS OF EACH OTHER'S CREEDS.

(From a Speech of Judge Platt, at the American General Assembly, 1832.)

My heart sickens at the deplorable want of candour which I every day witness among Christians, in defining each other's creeds. We are prone to caricature each other's opinions. We do not express the creed of others in the language and with

the qualifications which they employ, but in general phrases of our own, which are often calculated to present them in an odious or absurd view. I do not wish to confound truth with error, and I abhor the doctrine, that it is immaterial what a man believes. But, Sir, I feel much humbled under the conviction, that we are all frail, feeble, erring men; and that the human intellect, in the most wise and sagacious, can know nothing with perfection. Mists of prejudice, of which we are not conscious, often obscure the truth. Until men become angels, there will ever be "debateable ground," on which wise and good men will see truth in different lights; and where there is freedom, differences will be expressed; and when they are expressed, it will often be in careless or intemperate language; and hence collisions must be expected, in which Christians particularly are to be exercised and disciplined in the graces of meekness, forbearance, patience, and love.

Dr. HILL, in the same debate in which the above was uttered, observed—"I know by experience how things appear to us when we are heated by controversy; how molehills rise into mountains, and mountains shrivel into molehills; and how strange all this appears, even to ourselves, when we get cool. A smooth and tranquil lake reflects from its glassy surface the objects on its banks according to truth, like a perfect mirror. But ruffle it, agitate it, and you see every thing crooked and distorted into a thousand shapes. Such is the effect of controversy. In such a state of mind, men cannot, (I mean moral inability) they cannot see things as they are. It is a hard thing, in such circumstances, even for veracious men to tell the truth always."

NEGLECT OF ORDINANCES ON THE SABBATH.

THE places of worship are in this country, and especially in populous towns, comparatively large; and yet collegiate charges are rare. With the exception of assistants to aged or disabled ministers, it can scarcely be said that collegiate charges at all exist in this part of the country. It cannot, in strict propriety, be said of any Protestant charge in or about Glasgow. Now, we have already seen the present population of this city to be 202,426; and for these, there are only 81 places of worship, including even those small meetings where there is no regular or separate pastor. This leaves an average of about 2499 persons for every place of worship. The United States contain a population of 14,000,000, for which

they have 19,000 places of worship; or one to about every 736 persons. That is, there are more than *three* places of public worship in the United States, for *one* in the city of Glasgow, in proportion to its population. And in as many cases as there is a distinct pastor to every church, the families of an American congregation enjoy *three times* as much ministerial labour, as do the families of a Glasgow congregation. I am aware that congregations in a thinly peopled country, must be smaller and more difficult to minister to. But then we have to bear in mind, that some of the United States are but newly settled, and cannot possess the facilities of a wealthy town population; and that we are including, with the rural population of that country, also its city population. We hear much of American revivals in religion, and of the exertions there made to promote sanctity and religion; and many of us, taking an interest in these, are often putting the question, Why is it not so also with us? We here see one reason. Much good may be done among us, even circumstanced as we are; but other and greatly additional means must be employed, to bring a living Gospel into contact with the great masses of our population.

And this leads us to notice a circumstance which very much cripples the means which are thus provided. Churches are now generally got up in a greater or less degree, on the common mercantile principle of expecting a corresponding return in pounds, shillings and pence. This seems very generally to direct all the principle arrangements of church accommodation. Seats are let at a rate, if possible, to meet this. And hence they become no small item in a man's yearly expenditure, especially where there is a family. This is, in many cases, so heavy, that industrious and well-disposed parents, find it necessary to detain a considerable part of their family at home, because they cannot afford to procure for them seats in church; and thus are they trained, even under the eye of their parents, to neglect public ordinances. And will it then be wondered at, that careless parents should absent both themselves and their children, and plead this as their excuse? Again, it is found here, as in any other department of business, that seat-rents are best paid by the more wealthy; and that seats fitted to *their taste*, yield the best return; and, moreover, that they give respectability to the congregation, and are rather helpful than burdensome to it. And hence, when new churches are built, they are generally fitted up with ample accommodation of this kind, and with seat-rents sufficient to render any other

measure unnecessary, for shutting out the sons of toil, and preventing the unseemly sight of "a poor man in vile raiment." Whether from this principle or not, it has also become common, to leave little or no room at all for the destitute poor.

How short-sighted and unwise, even according to the maxims of the world, is all this? Is it not a matter of observation, as well as of Bible truth, that as it is sin which causes misery and leads to depression, so it is the enlightening influence of the divine word which is to lift up and restore? And if our brethren have fallen in their circumstances, whether from their own sins, or from national judgments on account of national sins, is it not just that very same word which is to lift them up, and to restore them to society? Was it not on this very principle that our fathers acted, under whose moral regimen, Scottish piety and Scottish veneration for the Sabbath were reared? Their principal was, not to narrow the way of entrance to the knowledge of the Saviour, or to render it accessible only to him who has something to pay; but to make it open and accessible to all, as the Saviour himself is, in the terms of the Gospel. They held that, as the word of God's grace is to be made known to all, so the means of having and hearing that word should be within reach of all. And as they were themselves professedly a Christian nation, and formed into Christian communities, so they thought it their duty, as such, to see that the words of their Master should still be held good, "and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." And then, as to the expense of building churches, and otherwise maintaining the ordinances of religion, instead of calculating how many inches of a seat an individual or family might happen to occupy, and so making this the measure of his share of expense, they thought in no respect unrighteous, to lay this burden on men as they were able to bear it; frankly inviting the poor man to bring his family along with him; and without at all looking forward to any corresponding charge being made against him. We have forsaken these old-fashioned principles, adopting the language of Cain, as more befitting modern refinement, saying, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and it becomes us not therefore to complain, that those who have thus been shut out of the house of God, should now become the disturbers of our Sabbath solemnities, and the despisers of our national laws.

In making these remarks, we are far from wishing to reflect, either on magistrates or on the managers of Dissenting and other chapels; and especially in connexion with that city, to

which these remarks are designed more especially to apply. The late residence of the writer in that city, as a minister of the Gospel, enables him to know that its magistrates have, for a number of years, done much to promote the efficiency of Gospel ordinances, and to enlarge the accommodation; and that the managers of Dissenting chapels, and of chapels in connexion with the Establishment, have done also much to earn the gratitude of the religious communities with which they are severally connected. But these, and all others in similar situations, must be mainly guided by the views of their constituents, and of public opinion; which will, we fear, be discovered when too late, to be at present greatly at fault on this head. Perhaps in this we are saying too much. The opinion which seems to prevail on this head may be correct and wise, according to certain principles applicable to mercantile or political transactions; but judging of them as we do, by the Bible, and with regard to the interests of the souls of men, we fear they are wrong, and entailing ruin on our country.

Nor do these evils exist merely in large towns. In country parishes also, where manufacturing villages have been formed, our population is brought into the same unnatural state. In many of these, chapels have been erected; some in connexion with the Established church, but a much greater number in connexion with some of the leading Presbyterian denominations of Dissenters. These, and the members of the Established church, having the same creed, observing essentially the same discipline, and looking back together through a long line of pious forefathers, who fought for Scottish liberties, and freely bled in defending and handing down to us entire, the faith once delivered to the saints; have much reason to rejoice in each other's welfare and efficiency, and to unite in building up the walls of that moral Zion, where our fathers so long worshipped God. These different bodies, whom we hail as our fellow-servants and fellow-workmen in Christ Jesus, have done much to follow and keep pace with the tide of population; but as these chiefly consist of the working and middle classes of society, it was not to be expected, as it is not found, that they should be able to provide either church accommodation or ministerial labour, for the destitute poor, and for those who, having scarcely any religious profession, are not even inclined to attend worship, much less to pay for its maintenance. The task of carrying the Gospel to these, and of furnishing them with church accommodation, properly belongs to the Established church. This is one of the very ends of a parochial

division, and an endowment independent of church members. But how are these parochial arrangements to meet the vast influx of population which flows in upon a parish, perhaps in the course of a few years, and sometimes without any other provision? What is to be done, when the church will not contain this additional population? It is said by some, compel the heritors to pull down the church and build a larger one. We defer offering any opinion, as to the power which church courts possess for enforcing such a measure. But we conceive it must appear to every intelligent and unbiassed mind, to be away from the principle on which heritors are, in ordinary cases, bound to provide church accommodation. It is in these circumstances supposed, that the population are substantially agricultural, and, therefore, the proprietors of land are held bound to provide church accommodation for its cultivators. And on the same principle, the magistrates of a burgh are the heritors of its parishes. But as another class of population, not coming under either of these two descriptions, are to be provided for, new means, and some corresponding arrangement, ought long ere now to have been adopted. Such an arrangement, like all others which have to be formed, might have difficulties connected with it, but not greater than those which our fathers had to encounter, and which they overcame. It is desirable still, that some arrangement should be adopted, and that a legislative enactment should be obtained, to render it efficient and permanent. But in the absence of this, it were well if parties connected with these different interests, were of themselves to unite in thus opening the house of God to all, and so stemming the current of profanity, and of sins which are the ruin of any nation.

Another circumstance connected with this change of things, and which is peculiar to the Established church, is the necessity which exists for the division and erection of parishes. The population has, as we have seen, been going on rapidly for perhaps fifty years; and yet the work of dividing and erecting parishes has, in many instances, been absolutely standing still. And now, some of our parishes have amounted to a population, which would once have been accounted great for a county. Two parishes in the immediate neighbourhood may be given as examples. The Abbey parish of Paisley contains a population of 26,000, and the Barony parish of Glasgow, a population of 77,385. To talk of one minister performing the parochial duties of such parishes, even if he had no congregational duty to discharge, is only to trifle. One twentieth part of the population of the Barony parish, is quite as much as any faith-

ful and conscientious minister could engage to take charge of, with the hope of fulfilling its duties. As to the practicability of dividing and erecting parishes, we can see no real obstacle now, which did not exist two hundred years ago, except that we are less zealous than our fathers were, for the *substantial* interests of our country, and the prosperity of religion. But as this is a matter which may be thought to interfere with the rights and property of others, we willingly leave it in their hands, praying that God may give to such as have the power, also the will and wisdom to devise for his glory; and thus to dry up one class of under springs, which are so fast desolating some of the fairest portions of our Lord's vineyard.

Another cause connected with the above, and also in a great measure peculiar to the Establishment, must not be omitted—we mean the appointment, by patronage, of ministers unacceptable to the people over whom they are to preside in holy things. Much has been said and written on the general subject of patronage. And as on every other controversial subject, where party ends are to be served by the particular views advocated, there have been many things stated which were neither true in themselves, nor fitted so much for any thing, as to minister strife and cause divisions. We wish, therefore, as much as possible to avoid at all entering on any general discussion.* It is difficult to see how any intelligent man, acquainted with his Bible, and really caring for the interests of religion, and the salvation of perishing sinners, should bring himself to approve of the appointment of a minister, contrary to the wishes, and without the concurrence of the church over whom he is to preside. Certainly such an appointment as this receives no countenance from the word of God, and is at variance with the spirit; and, in the judgment of many well qualified to form an opinion, equally with the existing laws of the Church of Scotland. The evil consequences of this abuse, not merely to the Establishment, but to the character of our country as a church-going people, have been much greater than parties im-

* To *Patronage*, in all its forms and with all its modifications, we entertain a most decided objection. There is no warrant for it in the Word of God. It stands condemned by the voice of sound reason. The Secession church has ever testified against it in the Scottish Establishment, as a gross and hideous abuse. Patronage is not an evil to be palliated, or softened down, or modified. It must be cut to pieces, root and branch. It is a godless secularizing monster, and wherever it is allowed to exist, it gives birth to simony, and a thousand other evils. The motto inscribed on Patronage must be "*Delenda est Carthago.*"—EDIT.

plicated in the charge can be expected to allow. They will be found, we fear, among the earliest causes of the delapidation of that admirable frame-work erected by our forefathers, for promoting piety in the church, and respect for religion, and reverence for its ordinances, among all classes of the community. It is cheering, however, to observe the rapid change which the exercise of patronage, both in the crown and otherwise, has undergone during the last dozen years; and it is corroborative of the above sentiments, that very much in proportion as patronage has been exercised in accordance with the wishes of the people, so have the practices and efficient ministrations of the fathers of our church been imitated and introduced. And it is still more cheering, when proceeding on these facts and experiments, to look forward in thought to the spreading of this over our mother land; and the renewal of those halcyon days, when the Sun of Righteousness seemed to shine without setting on our beloved country.

We must still advert to one other source of the neglect of divine ordinances. We mean the neglect of private clerical duties, such as the instruction of the young, parochial and congregational visitation and catechising, and week-day and other instructions, brought down to the level of the least informed. The neglect of these is, no doubt, in part owing to ministerial charges being so much overgrown, as to put it out of the power of any one man to reach them. And this has, perhaps, sometimes led to general neglect. But we fear that the evil complained of will be found where such an apology cannot be urged. We trust, however, that deficient as we are in many things, there is in this a begun and growing improvement. The young is, we believe, in most parts of this district of country, taken under charge by their pastors, and parochial and congregational visitations are carried on in circumstances which a stranger would account impracticable. And we trust it will not be long, when these and other clerical duties referred to, shall have become quite general. And should this be realized, church ordinances will not fail to be attended. Let but the time once come, if we are again to see it, when parochial and congregational charges shall be so manageable, as to put it in the power of the pastor to know all the families of his flock. Let him in these circumstanees be found treading in the very steps of the fathers of our church, and she will again put on the beauty and the vigour of youth. Our churches will then be full of devout worshippers, and our streets will be still and solemn on the Lord's day; and the

sound of the evening and the morning devotions of families, will be heard from house to house as in the olden time.—*Macfarlan on the Sabbath.*

CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL.

THE two great Presbyterian bodies in Ulster have at present a very inadequate supply of candidates for the ministry. Their missionary labours are not at all what they should be. They want labourers for foreign parts, and labourers at home. Is there no deficiency of encouragement for young men in humble circumstances presenting themselves as candidates for the Christian ministry? Is it, or is it not the fact, that no matter what qualification a poor young lad may possess, yet the door of the sacred ministry is closed against him, unless he can command the means of feeing classes, and supporting himself during his collegiate course? Let your readers think seriously and prayerfully, whether or not these things should be so. It is not so among their Presbyterian brethren in the United States of America. They have an education society, conducted on the noble principle of suffering no young man to be excluded from the ministry of the Gospel on pecuniary grounds alone. This is the pledge which the society have given to the world, and thus far they have nobly redeemed it. Would it not be a very melancholy thought that there should be a single individual qualified for the sacred ministry, into whose soul the Spirit of God had put a desire for it, whom stern poverty holds back from fulfilling the warm wish of his heart. Let this hint be sufficient to call forth a fund of benevolence for obtaining, from among God's poor, a supply of faithful men to preach the Gospel to the poor, by whose agency many, poor like themselves, may, like themselves, become rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Our congregations and our Sunday-schools are surely not so very barren, that they do not contain many young men qualified for the sacred office, and having the means, too, of coming forward. Why, then, should the loud call for labourers in the world's great harvest be so tardily answered. Let me entreat such persons to give an honest examination to the duty of devoting themselves to the glorious work, and let me assist them in the work of examination.

What then is to determine the duty of our individual in this most important matter, as plainly it is far from being the duty of all religious young men to devote themselves to the ministry?

At the very threshold, therefore, each one is to inquire as to his natural qualifications for the work. It would be monstrous to suppose that God would call any one to the work of the ministry whom he had not furnished with the necessary natural qualifications.

The design of the ministry is to persuade men to be reconciled to God; and he must have a strange idea of God's mode of working, who imagines that such an arduous and noble work can be accomplished without talents and qualifications of a very superior order.

There may be with some a superstitious fear and reverence respecting the ministry, which may keep them back while they should go forward; but let them remember, that for those whom God qualifies, whether rich or poor, the door of the pulpit is open—the highest and lowest are welcome whom God welcomes; and whatever be the difficulties or anxieties of the office, let it never be forgotten, that God's grace is sufficient for his people, and that his strength is perfected in weakness.

It is certainly discouraging to look forward through ten or twelve long years of literary preparation for the ministry; but if the office be not a recompense a thousand fold for all this, it is worth nothing. It is quite true, that many a private Christian is more extensively useful than many ministers; and it is true, also, that it would be better for the church and the world, were many even pious ministers sunk to private life. Still, however, as to a man's comparative usefulness, whether engaged in the ministry of the Gospel or in another employment, there can be no question.

There is much truth, no doubt, in the statement, that we want useful laymen in the church, as well as useful ministers. The real question, however, is, where is the deficiency greatest; and in what department would a full supply produce the greatest results? Unquestionably in the ministry.

Is it necessary for me to say, that in the case of every candidate for such an office as the holy ministry, there should be a love for Christ and the souls of men, and a sincere desire to fulfil the command—Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature? There should be in every case a simple and strong desire to make known salvation to lost men. Let a man but undertake the great work with such motives and

feelings, and who knows, whatever may be his weakness or his fears at first, how soon he may be able to say—wo is me if I preach not the Gospel.

The man who intends to find a comfortable snug birth in the office of the ministry, should never enter it. The church is beginning to wake up to a sense of her great responsibility; she is beginning to see that with her rests the arduous and important task of converting the world unto God. The heathen world and the nominally Christian world are calling aloud for missionaries. Let no man become a candidate for the sacred ministry, whose spirit does not meet this call. I will not put it in the form of an assertion, but merely as a question—*Is the man fit to stay at home as a minister, who is not willing to go abroad as a missionary?*

Has any pious reader had thoughts of entering the holy ministry, and have worldly engagements, matrimonial engagements, pecuniary embarrassments, or any similar reasons induced him to put these thoughts away? Let him recal them; and if he believes them to have been suggestions from on high, let him beware how he tampers with them, or resists them. God is doing a very great work. Oh, what an honour to become a fellow-labourer with him! Remember that he who converts a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide the multitude of sins. They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

ALCUIN.

MARTIN LUTHER AND THE DEVIL.

THIS heading, it must be confessed, does not place our Reformer in the most respectable society; but it is not the first time that Satan has appeared among "the sons of God." The abettors of Popery, at the period of the glorious Reformation, preferred the most extraordinary and incredible charges against the illustrious men, through whose instrumentality the Antichristian system was crumbling to ruins. The conduct of the Reformers was misrepresented; statements derogatory to their character were fabricated, and eagerly put into circulation; their motives were wilfully misconstrued; and, in fact, every thing that a mendacious and exasperated spirit could suggest was accomplished, with a view to their destruction. In the admirable life of JOHN KNOX, by the late Doctor M'Crie,

some specimens are furnished of the slanderous and lying accusations with which that great man was assailed. Even the cheering solemnities of his death-bed were not proof against the calumny and falsehood of the Popish faction.

From the eminent moral position occupied by Luther, as might be expected, the enemy's deadliest fire was directed against him. He was "every where spoken against." The thunders of the Vatican, and the squibs and puffs of petty pamphleteering were all employed to "fright him from his propriety." His life was peril all over. He moved in the region of growling and battling elements. His home was the home of tempests.

Amid the multitudinous charges preferred against Luther, there is one which is somewhat unique in its character. It is a master charge, and, if substantiated, it certainly ought to hold up the Reformer and the Reformation wholesale to the maledictions of the world. This charge is no less than that the principles of the Reformation were instilled into Luther by the DEVIL; and, in proof, the Papist confidently appeals to a passage in the writings of the party accused. Well we have perused the passage, and it has convinced us—not that the injurious allegation is founded—but that the original assailant of Luther was a dishonest man and a calumniator. Let us, however, look at the evidence.

In the passage in question, Luther states, that, on a certain occasion, he awoke suddenly at midnight, and that then Satan commenced with him a disputation respecting the guilt which he had incurred by celebrating mass for the space of fifteen years. It was a scene of powerful and severe temptation. Satan argued unanswerably against private masses, and displayed, in horrifying colours, the Reformer's exposedness to the righteous judgments of God. For what purpose? Was it to urge Luther to prosecute more vigorously the great work of the Reformation? No, no; but it was to induce him to *despair* of the mercy of God, and to give himself up as lost beyond redemption. There was truth in the accusation brought by Satan, as our Reformer has clearly shown, and therefore the temptation was the more seductive and the more tremendous. We supply Luther's own comment on the passage, as at once highly judicious, and furnishing a specimen of some of the striking peculiarities of his character and style.

"But here the sanctified fathers will answer me—here they will laugh out and say—'What! and are you the illustrious doctor, and you cannot answer the devil? Are you so igno-

rant as not to know that the devil is a liar?' Oh! Mr. Popeling, I do return many and great thanks to your worship for your sweet consolation in this grave matter. These five little words—*the devil is a liar*, I had perhaps known nothing of, unless from your counsel, most surprising theologer! Had I been a Papist, inexperienced in doubt or temptation, one whom Satan might leave alone, secure and snoring, as he always leaves those that indulge to their hearts' content in their lusts, then I might be a great giant, stout and strong against a foe afar off. But, indeed, and in earnest, had you to sustain the buffetings of Satan, and to enter into conflict with him, then your song about *your* Church would not long hold—you would not long whistle to your old tune. For, in truth, I see sufficiently in David and the other prophets, how powerfully they wrestled and groaned in these and the like combats with the devil and his horrible assaults.

"Even Christ himself (without sin as he was), for our sakes, in how many sorrows and sufferings did he wrestle during his contest with Satan. For Satan, indeed, drags to the very roots the heart-strings, nor ever gives over until repulsed by the Word of God. And I am plainly persuaded that Emser Oecolampadius, and such as they, would in an instant be annihilated under these horrible buffetings and shakings. Nor indeed could the human heart bear up against this horrid and unspeakable assault, unless God was present with it; for Satan, in the twinkling of an eye, overclouds the whole mind with his mists and terrors; and if he find nothing but a *mere* mortal, unprepared and uninstructed from the Word of God, he upsets the whole man, as I may say, with a fillip of his little finger.

"True it is, and out of all doubt, that Satan is a liar; but his lies are the handywork of no ordinary composer of lies; his falsities are more cunning, more deep laid to deceive, than the human conception can come to the bottom of. For thus he lays his plot; even so as to take to his hand some solid, undeniable verity, and *it* he keenly sharpens and cunningly urges; and thus he speciously daubs over his own proper lie, and so he deceives the most cautious. As that cogitation which struck on the heart of Judas was most true—'I have betrayed the innocent blood.' This, Judas could not possibly deny. But then came the lie—"Judas, you must despair of the mercy of God;" and so Satan here, in this way, suggested his own proper lie, and so overwhelmingly urged it that Judas could not get over it, and so he *despaired*.

"Therefore, brother of mine, good master Papist, Satan

does not lie, when he accuses or urges the magnitude of my sin; for here he has two grave and incontestible witnesses, to wit, the law of God, and a man's own proper conscience. *I cannot deny but that I have sinned; I cannot gainsay that my sin is great; I cannot but allow that I am guilty of death and damnation. But here Satan lies when further he would press on me that I should despair of divine grace, and say, as Cain said, My sin is greater than I can bear.* So then, indeed, in such an agony, there is need of divine and heavenly help, that either a brother might be present, who from *without* might console you with the promises of divine grace, or from *within* the Holy Spirit, by the word of a brother, might lift up, invigorate, and sustain your heart, so as to enable it to reason with itself, and say, 'I, indeed, before the devil, confess, convinced as I am by God's law, that I have sinned—that I am condemned as Judas was; but I do turn me to Christ, with Peter—I look to his merits and unsearchable riches, and he has condemned all my horrible condemnation. Out of Christ I should have been, indeed, guilty of eternal death; but since I am in Christ—in him believing, on him invoking, then already my damnation is damned; my guiltiness is itself guilty. And so here I can instantly affirm, even *if* I am a sinner, yet am I innocent and holy in Jesus. Sinner I am, it is true, *in* myself, *out* of Christ; but holy, pure, cleansed out of myself *in* Christ, because he himself blotted out my sins with his blood; and concerning this great matter, I do not doubt that in his atonement I have received baptism, absolution, and sacraments as the certain seals of divine grace.'"

We quote from a pamphlet published in Dublin, we believe, about the year 1824. Our readers will perceive, that in Luther's own estimation, the tendency of Satan's assault on him was not to aid, but to extinguish for ever the incipient glories of Protestantism. Besides the "disputation with Satan," as he styles it, did not take place till after he had embraced tenets subversive of the unfounded pretensions of the Popish church; so that whatever view of the question we take, there is not a shadow of support afforded to the conclusion, that Luther learned his religion from the Devil. There has been devil-teaching about the affair, we acknowledge; but such teaching was administered to those who basely and falsely charge the Reformer, simply because he laid before the world a triumphant exposure of the corruptions and mummeries which they had ingrafted on the pure stock of Christianity. According to

Erasmus, himself a sort of Papist, Luther committed two great evils—"he touched the Monks' bellies and the Pope's crown."

WICLIF.

TEMPERANCE MEETING.

ACCORDING to advertisement, a meeting of delegates connected with Temperance Societies in Ulster, assembled on the 24th ult., in the Belfast Temperance Hotel, from which they adjourned to the Commissioners' Room, Commercial Buildings.

Between forty and fifty individuals were present from Societies in Coleraine, Cookstown, Stewartstown, Maghera, Armagh, Fourtowns, Portglenone, Ballymoney, and many other places. The Rev. Mr. Heatly, vicar of Randalstown, having been called to the chair, and the Rev. Mr. Morgan having opened the meeting with prayer, a number of letters of apology for absence were read, as also suggestions for a more effectual advancement of the Temperance reformation from William Blacker, Esq., and the Rev. Messrs. Atkinson and Henry.

The meeting then entered on the consideration of a number of propositions submitted to them by the Secretaries of the Ulster Temperance Society, and resolved—1. That it is highly desirable that a Temperance agent be appointed for Ireland, and that the Secretaries correspond on the subject with the Hibernian and Cork Temperance Societies, inviting them to unite with the Ulster Temperance Society in his support. This resolution was passed with the understanding, that all friends of Temperance in Ireland would be unanimous in the wish to obtain the services of the Rev. George Carr, of New-Ross.

2. That it is essential to the success of the Temperance reformation in Ulster, that an agent for the province be immediately appointed, a portion of whose duty shall be to organize county Societies, to which the appointment of local agents is earnestly recommended.

An individual was strongly recommended to the meeting, as qualified to act as provincial agent, and the Committee of the Ulster Temperance Society were requested to take steps immediately for securing his services.

3. That a more concentrated and extended system of organization, both in local districts and throughout the province, is necessary for securing steady and permanent success for the Temperance reformation. A number of important suggestions

on this subject were brought forward by different speakers, particularly as to the practical management of different Societies, and some pleasing specimens of the reformation of drunkards were adduced.

4. That Temperance Societies, in admitting persons who have been habitual drunkards, should take special care that they are fully convinced of all required of them; and that a due degree of prominence be given to a fundamental principle of Temperance Societies, that the drunkard has no warrant to expect permanent reformation, while continuing the use of any intoxicating liquor. It is also particularly recommended, that all Societies shall take the most effective measures for exercising vigilant superintendence over their members, and for holding public meetings frequently and regularly.

5. That suitable collecting cards be prepared and circulated for obtaining funds; and that the friends of Temperance throughout the province are earnestly requested to use their best efforts for obtaining donations and annual subscriptions for defraying the necessary expenses of the Ulster Temperance Society.

The delegates present pledged themselves to do all in their power in their respective districts, for obtaining pecuniary contributions; and it was announced to the meeting, that William Blacker, Esq. of Armagh, had given a donation of fifty pounds, and ordered his name to be entered for a subscription of ten pounds annually.

6. That the Secretaries of the Societies throughout the province be requested to forward immediately to the Secretaries of the Ulster Temperance Society an accurate account of the numbers and present condition of their Societies, as also of the best mode of maintaining a correspondence with them.

It was stated to the meeting, that there is reason to expect that the Temperance Society will shortly obtain the same liberty of the post-office as enjoyed by some other Societies.

7. That ministers of the Gospel, in Ulster, members of the Temperance Society, be requested to preach on Temperance on Sabbath the first of May next, and that the committee of the Ulster Temperance Society be requested to engage the services of the greatest number of advocates in their power to give the first week of May to the promotion of Temperance by means of public meetings.

8. That another convention be held, in Belfast, on the 10th of August next, the 7th anniversary of the temperance reformation in the old world.

The whole of the preceding resolutions were passed without

a single dissentient voice, and the cordiality and zeal which pervaded the proceedings of the day were most encouraging, and gave good promise for the future. At four o'clock, the delegates dined together in the Temperance hotel, where, without any intoxicating stimulus, all seemed to enjoy the bliss of sociality and the real pleasure of the table.

At seven the same evening, a company of more than 300 assembled at a Temperance Soirée, when after tea, William Blacker, Esq., of Armagh, was called to the chair, and very interesting addresses were delivered by the Rev. Messrs. Heatly, Morgan, Johnston, M'Ilwaine, Wilson, and Moffat. A report of a Temperance meeting among the inmates of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and the Blind, was heard with much satisfaction, as also an account of a Temperance Soirée among a party of workmen, on the evening of last Patrick's day.

The whole arrangements for the evening were most orderly and correct, the singing of the temperance hymns, one of which was composed for the occasion, with the accompaniment of the piano forte, had the happiest effect; and the genuine satisfaction and enjoyment manifest in every countenance, bore strong practical testimony to the truth of the principles which Temperance Societies teach.

SCRAPS.

A Scene of Usefulness.—"You long to be useful," says Jay; and why are you not? Can you want either opportunity or materials; *you*, who are placed at the head of families; you who are required to rule well your own households; to dwell with your wives, according to knowledge; to train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to behave towards your servants, as remembering that you have also a Master in heaven? Behold, O man of God, a congregation, endeared and attentive, committed to thy trust. Behold a flock, whom you may feed with knowledge and understanding, and before whom you may walk as an example, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. *Behold a church in thy house.* Behold an altar, on which to offer the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise.

Young Men—why they should work for God.—The inspired John wished to enlist the aid of young men in the church, "because they were strong." For the same reason we

now invite you to come up with greater boldness to the help of the Lord. "Ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you." Yes, young men, ransomed by the blood of Jesus, enjoying the light of heaven, and filled with the love of Christ, are the strongest agents in our moral world. The holy truths they dispense, the light they shed, the sword they wield, and the zeal and compassion they display, are the strongest weapons in the armour of God. These weapons have a direct tendency to demolish the strong-holds of Satan. It is true, that such is the inveteracy of sin, that even these weapons will not subdue it, unless attended by the aid of the Holy Ghost. But on this account you have no more right to say that they are impotent, that they have no tendency to overcome the heart, than you would have to say, that battering engines have no force, merely because they do not beat down a strong fortress. No, my young friends, "ye are strong," and your strength, when put forth in humble dependence, will be triumphant. Come forward, then, without wavering, draw the spiritual sword, throw away its scabbard, and disdain all thoughts of respite in your warfare, till released by death, and taken up to heaven to be crowned as conquerors. The great enterprize which the religious world has just commenced, must be conducted chiefly by your instrumentality. Such is its nature and magnitude, that it must be accomplished by those who possess a high degree of physical and religious power. Who are to cross the mighty deep, to aid in the translation and printing of the Scriptures and tracts, to be spread through the eastern empire of darkness? Who are to set up Sunday-schools, and to plant churches, to bless that rising world which is soon to sway the destinies of our nation? Who are to go to the poor Indians to their western wilds, to partake with them in all their privations and hardships, for the privilege of proclaiming to them a Saviour's love? Who are to sustain the banners of the cross which are now planted around the globe, and keep alive those gospel fires which are now scattered over pagan lands? Who will endure the burning heat of the line, or the eternal frosts of the poles? Who, I say, are to perform these services, and to fill these posts? Look at facts. Who have already gone forth as the heralds of peace among gentile nations? Are they not young men, who cannot but declare what they have seen and heard? O, then, listen to the gospel trumpet, which is now sounding for new volunteers in the army of the living God. Who is on the Lord's side? Who will now come forward and say, "Here am I, send me?"

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."—Dr. Chapin's Sermon in Nat. Preacher.

Trials productive of Good.—"I remember," says Mr. Whitfield, "some years ago, when I was at Shields, I went into a glass-house; and standing very attentive, I saw several masses of burning glass, of various forms. The workman took a piece of glass, and put it into one furnace, then into a second, and then into a third. I said to him, 'Why do you put it through so many fires?' He answered, 'O, Sir, the first was not hot enough, nor the second, and, therefore, we put it into a third, and that will make it transparent.'" This furnished Mr. W. with a useful hint, that we must be tried and exercised with many fires, until our dross be purged away, and we are made fit for the owner's use.

Strange Inconsistency.—Many professed Christians pretend to send up their petitions to the court of heaven, for the coming of the kingdom of Christ on earth; yet they manifest so great an indifference on the subject, that they will not avail themselves of the reading of a religious newspaper, to enable them to learn whether their petitions have been granted or not! How different is the case when a petition is sent to the constituted authorities of our civil department, in regard to some secular concern! Anxious inquiry is made, as to the fate of the petition, on the return of every mail. And so it is with the *living* Christian, who petitions in *earnest* before the court of heaven. It surely cannot be otherwise. If he is concerned on the subject, he will anxiously inquire whether his petition has been granted or not; and if not, of the cause of its rejection. Nothing can be more reasonable than this.—*Cross and Banner.*

The Scriptures.—To believe the Gospel, is but to give God credit for being wiser than ourselves.

When a believer is in a state of comfort and prosperity, he can read other books beside the Bible; but when he is tempted or distressed, he betakes himself to his Bible alone.

The pages of Scripture, like the productions of nature, not only endure the test, but improve upon the trial. The *application of the microscope* to the one, and *close meditation* on the other, display new beauties, and higher attractions, unseen before.

Without the powerful agency of the Spirit of God to en-

lighten our understandings, and to apply the doctrines of the Bible to our hearts, we shall be, even with the word of light and life in our hands, like blind Bartimeus, sitting in the beams of day.

We are desirous to have well printed Bibles; but the best impression of the Bible, is that on the tablets of the believer's heart.

Strains of wit, and philosophical speculations, in opposition to the oracles of God, are but as spiders' webs to catch flies; more fit to take the fancy than to save the soul.

Other books may make men learned in the things of this world; but the Bible only can make men wise unto salvation.—*Churchman's Almanac.*

The Resurrection.—A freethinker once said to R. Gahiba, "Ye fools who believe in a Resurrection! See ye not that the living die? How, then, can you believe that the dead shall live?" "Silly man," replied Gahiba, "thou believest in creation. Well, then, if what never before existed, now exists, why may not that which once existed exist again?"

In *the reformed churches of France*, there are, it is stated in the Archives du Christianisme, three hundred and sixty-one officiating ministers. Eight churches are without pastors. There are eighty-seven consistorial churches extending into fifty-three departments. In the theological faculties of Montouban and Strasburg, there are eleven professors, and one professorship is vacant.

Want of Time.—The great reason why men find so little time, is because they waste so much. They forget that hours are made up of minutes, and days of hours; and by neglecting to seize the passing moments, they lose weeks and months. Much time, too, is lost in deciding about what to employ ourselves, when many objects press upon us, each claiming our attention, and each, seeming of equal importance. Were we acting according to a regular appropriation of time, these hours of unpleasant deliberation would be saved, and thus our amount of disposable time would be largely increased. This plan would contribute very much to our happiness. We should free ourselves from the tormenting uneasiness of present suspense, and lay up much food for pleasant retrospection.

Sin.—One leak will sink a ship: one *sin* will destroy a sinner.—*Churchman's Almanac.*

ENCOURAGEMENT TO MINISTERS IN CANADA.

WE have been favoured by the Rev. W. M'Alister, Clarke's Bridge, with a letter, which he recently received from Rev. George M'Clatchey, formerly minister in the Irish Presbyterian Secession Church, at present labouring in the United Secession, Niagara district, Upper Canada. This letter contains information, which must be highly interesting to ministers or probationers intending to emigrate. The evil is, that our supply of preachers for home consumption has been for some time, and still continues, so miserably scanty, that we can afford no exports. Mr. M'Clatchey went out a few years since, and immediately after his arrival, had two different spheres of labour at his option. The place on which he fixed is about 30 miles North of the Falls of Niagara, in a district pretty numerously inhabited, and of great fertility. At the time of his settlement, as pastor, a member of the congregation made him a present of a small farm, on the stage road, and executed for him a title-deed forever, without the expense of a shilling. Comfortable in his worldly circumstances, and enjoying, as he states, a wide field of ministerial usefulness, Mr. M'Clatchey urges on the church in this country, and especially on the Secession Church, to send out labourers to the Canadas. On a comparison of the country with Ireland, his native spot, he gives a decided preference to the land of his adoption. We rejoice also to learn from his letter, that the influence of the temperance reformation is powerfully felt in the Canadas. "I need not mention," says Mr. M'Clatchey, "what kind of young men I should wish to come to America. Send us *no drunkards*, or they will be sent home to you again."

With regard to the support of Secession ministers in Canada, Mr. M'Clatchey observes, that each has about £70 from Government, and that congregations, in general, make up at least the same amount. The cause he represents as flourishing, and the only complaint is *want* of a sufficient number of labourers. This subject should seriously engage the attention of the churches at home. We pray the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth labourers into his harvest, but do we use the means of obtaining an answer to our prayer?

The letter concludes with expressing a wish for the circulation in Canada, of "Paul's refutation of Arianism, and defence of Calvinism"—a work of decided and acknowledged merit.

Wilson, Printer, Belfast.